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Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose

The primary purpose for preparing a neighborhood plan for Twinbrook is to provide ~~our~~ area residents and property owners with an opportunity to plan for their community's future. This plan is intended to offer a blueprint for the community for the next twenty years. The members of the Advisory Group worked very hard and for long hours to make sure that the Plan is in line with the Mayor and Council's March 2004 initiative to strengthen Rockville's neighborhoods and sense of community, and to ensure that new development in the City enhances Rockville's quality of life.

Planning Area Description

The Twinbrook area is located in the southeastern section of the City and the neighborhoods are bounded by the CSX and Metro railroad tracks to the southwest, First Street/Norbeck Road to the northwest and the City's eastern boundary along Rock Creek Park and Twinbrook Parkway. The neighborhoods are bisected by Veirs Mill Road, which contains the primary commercial node in the area.

The City of Rockville Master Plan considers the area north of Veirs Mill Road to be Planning Area 7, Twinbrook Forest/Northeast Rockville. Planning Area 8, Twinbrook, is south of Veirs Mill Road. However, many City residents consider the "Twinbrook" neighborhood to be located both north and south of Veirs Mill Road, and for the purposes of developing a new Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan, the two Planning Areas are being considered together. Considering the two adjacent planning areas together offers an opportunity to examine the land use and zoning elements, together with other shared concerns, in a consistent and even-handed manner.

Planning History

The Twinbrook neighborhoods south of Veirs Mill Road (Planning Area 8) were considered in the 1982 Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan. The neighborhoods north of Veirs Mill Road (Planning Area 7) have not previously been considered at the neighborhood level, but were studied as part of the City-wide Master Plan, which was adopted by the Mayor and Council in November 2002.

The Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan (Planning Area 8) of 1982 expressed the following goal as its primary vision statement: (p. 11):

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“The Twinbrook Neighborhood should be a “community” characterized by high quality living space and excellence in provision of community services and facilities, public and private, at a scale appropriate for maintaining and enhancing the present integrity of the neighborhood.”

This statement expressed the desires of the community at the time and stood out as the primary goal for the entire document. It formed the

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basis for the supporting objectives and policies of the Neighborhood Plan in the various components of the document (transportation, housing, land use and zoning, environmental protection, community services, recreation and parks, etc.).

The 1982 Plan outlined four related objectives that provide more specifics as to the intent of the goal and how it might be achieved (p. 11):

- “Sustaining the existing residential character, (principally single family, owner-occupied detached housing), through continuation of high standards for maintaining and enhancing housing and community facilities;”
- “Denying external attempts of encroachment; (zoning changes which would impact the character of the neighborhood.)”
- “Continuing to seek direction from the neighborhood on issues affecting its future;”
- “Encouraging safe circulation for pedestrians and vehicles.”

This goal and four objectives are as relevant today as they were twenty-four years ago.

The City’s 2002 Comprehensive Master Plan confirmed the intent of the 1982 Plan for Planning Area 8 while recommending that the current residential zoning be retained for Planning Area 7. The Plan noted that there were concerns about residential maintenance and inadequate buffering between residential and other uses in both Planning Areas.

Neighborhood Vision

The existing Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan (Planning Area 8, approved in 1982) and the recommendations approved in the City-wide Comprehensive Master Plan (approved 2002) for Twinbrook Forest and Northeast Rockville (Planning Area 7) ~~have~~ acted as a starting point in the identification and evaluation of the issues and conditions.

The Advisory Group used the goals and objectives from the 1982 Plan as the basis for formulating their vision for the new neighborhood plan. They also looked to the City’s

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fundamental vision for the entire City, as stated in the Comprehensive Master Plan of 2002:

“Rockville will continue to be a city that emphasizes the characteristics of a small town community, offers an excellent quality of life, provides a responsive government serving its citizens, and has a distinct positive identity tied to its history.”

The Advisory Group proposed the following vision for the community:

“Twinbrook has evolved from a low-density, single-family residential suburban area, into an increasingly diverse and densely populated neighborhood. One constant has always been a community that values civic engagement and quality of life issues. The Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan seeks to preserve these strengths: by maintaining and enhancing the historic residential character of Twinbrook; by upgrading its publicly owned spaces and facilities; by intelligent planning/zoning that encourages easy access to retail and mass transit, provides for recreation while fostering community pride; and, by directing future growth towards mixed-use development on land currently zoned for commercial and industrial uses, as designated in this Plan.”

Twinbrook Neighborhood Planning Process

The Twinbrook neighborhood planning process proceeded as follows:

- Assemble staff Resource Team
- Outreach to Community and Community Workshops
- Advisory Group Appointment and Formation
- Advisory Group Meetings
- Drafting of Plan and Recommendations

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- Neighborhood Meetings to Review Draft plan
- Final Draft completed and Approved
- Planning Commission Public Hearing and Approval
- Mayor and Council Public Hearing, Review and Adoption

The foundation for the planning process began with two neighborhood meetings held on November 9 and 16, 2004. The meetings were well attended by both community residents and City staff. At each meeting participants were divided into groups and a Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercise was conducted to help the community identify the issues facing them. Participants ranked their responses in order of importance and staff tallied the responses. In addition a survey was sent to every

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address within the two Planning Areas and more than 300 responses were received. The concerns expressed were similar to those brought out at the meeting. City staff was also surveyed to determine their concerns about the Twinbrook area.

The major issues, reflected throughout the SWOT and survey process, were that residents regarded the neighborhood's proximity to Metro, shopping and services, parks and recreational facilities as strengths. They also valued their neighbors and the diversity of the area. Increasing traffic, inadequate code enforcement, crime and loitering and the possibility of adverse impacts from adjacent redevelopment were regarded as weaknesses and threats. Opportunities were seen in the ability to improve and expand their homes; increased recreational options from both the City and the commercial sector and increased transit options – particularly in services to and from the Metro.

Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan Advisory Group

The Mayor and Council appointed the 22-member Twinbrook Advisory Group on March 7, 2005. The Advisory Group consisted primarily of neighborhood residents, many of whom worked closely with their respective neighborhood associations. The Group, and City staff, sought input and participation from area business and property owners during the process.

The Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan Advisory Group held its first meeting on April 7, 2005, at the Twinbrook Community Center Annex, met approximately twice a month at locations within the community until the Fall of 2006, and considered a range of topics related to the future of Twinbrook, including future land use, housing, non-residential areas, transportation, public facilities and community services and the impact of adjacent development. City staff has also maintained email contact with a group of community, business and County planning stakeholders throughout the Planning process.

Demographic and Social Indicators

City staff compiled the following demographic profiles of the two Twinbrook Planning Areas, and the City as a whole, from data obtained by the US Census of 2000. Demographic information is an important tool for allocating City resources, and is also used to support applications for state and federal funding for future schools, parks, senior centers, libraries, housing and hospitals. It is also important for residents to understand the trends within their neighborhoods and help them formulate the future direction of needed City services within the community

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Neighborhood General Characteristics	Twinbrook: Planning Area 8	Twinbrook Forest- Northeast Rockville: Planning Area 7	Total for both Twinbrook Planning Areas:	City of Rockville
Population	5,414	5,433	10,847	47,388
Male	2,767	2,692	5,459	23,106
Female	2,647	2,741	5,388	24,282
Under 5 years	345	361	706	2,992
65 years and over	612	719	1,331	6,215
Housing	2,683	2,006	4,689	17,786
Median value (dollars)	148,500	159,717	154,109	198,700
Occupied housing units	2,624	1,964	4,588	17,247
Owner-occupied	1,580	1,477	3,057	11,669
Renter-occupied	1,044	487	1,531	5,578
Vacant housing units	59	42	101	539

US Census 2000

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Social Characteristics	Twinbrook: Planning Area 8	Twinbrook Forest- Northeast Rockville Planning Area 7	Total for both Twinbrook Planning Areas:	City of Rockville
Population 25 years and over	3,837	4,229	8,066	33,216
High school graduate or higher	3,126	3,633	6,759	29,601
Bachelor's Degree or higher	1,151	1,657	2,808	17,581
Population of one race	4,148	4,443	8,591	45,907
White alone	3,362	3,427	6,789	32,120
Black /African American alone	335	396	731	4,317
Hispanic or Latino*	1,190	860	2,050	5,529
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	30	31	61	160
Asian alone	402	562	964	7,030
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	5	1	6	15
Some other race alone	14	26	40	2,265
Population of two or more races	19	130	149	1,481
Speak a language other than English at home (5 years and over)	1,916	1,660	3,576	16,349

US Census 2000

* Hispanic or Latino can be of any race

This data indicates that 22% of the residents of Planning Area 8 and 16% of Planning Area 7 identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino in the 2000 Census, making those of Hispanic or Latino origin the largest minority ethnic group in the Twinbrook neighborhoods

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Economic Characteristics	Twinbrook: Planning Area 8	Twinbrook Forest- Northeast Rockville Planning Area 7	Total for both Twinbrook Planning Areas:	City of Rockville
In labor force (16 years and over)	2,938	3,216	6,154	25,037
Median family income (dollars)	59,993	71,956	65,975	79,051
Per Capita income (dollars)	23,594	25,404	24,499	30,518
Families below poverty level	115	117	232	668
Individuals below poverty level	459	473	932	3,555
Percentage of individuals below poverty level	8.5%	8.7%	8.6%	7.5%

Census 2000

According to the U.S. Census in 2000, the two Twinbrook Planning Areas had a household population of 10,864 - 5,388 females (50%) and 5,459 (50%) males. 26% of the population were under 18 years old, and 12% were 65 years and older.

Size of Households

The US Census 2000 indicated that the average household size in the Twinbrook areas was 2.8 persons per household, compared with 2.6 persons per household citywide. Planning Area 8 is estimated at 2.9 persons per household and Planning Area 7 at 2.7 persons per household, indicating that there are more residents per household in Twinbrook than in both the balance of the City, and the County as a whole.

Household Composition

Family households made up 71% of the households in Twinbrook. This figure includes both married-couple families (56%) and other families (15%). Nonfamily households made up to 8% of all households in Twinbrook. Female single parent households comprised 11% of the population, and one-person households comprised 21% of the population.

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Senior Citizens Living Alone

According to the US Census 2000 there were 272 residents (17% of the City total) of 65 years and older living alone in the three census tracts that make up the Twinbrook neighborhoods.

Twinbrook Neighborhoods – Senior Citizens Living Alone		
	Male Householder; living alone; 65 years and older	Female Householder; living Alone; 65 years and older
Census Tract 7011-02 (Planning Area 8)	14	119
Census Tract 7011-01 (Planning Area 7 south of Baltimore Road)	0	18
Census Tract 7009-03 (Planning 7 north of Baltimore Road including part of East Rockville)	26	95
City of Rockville	334	1,238

US Census 2000

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Occupied Housing Units Characteristics

The Twinbrook area has approximately 3,848 housing units, 2% of which were vacant and 98% occupied. There are very few vacant lots or lots that could be re-subdivided within the planning area. On the total occupied housing units, 67% were owner occupied and 33% renter occupied.

Demographic Trends

While the decennial U.S. Census provides the most accurate information about the demographic composition of a neighborhood it does not, by the very nature of its ten-year cycle, capture change over time within the ten-year time frame. There are a number of additional sources of data, but many of them are projections, and most are not available at the neighborhood scale. One exception is data collected by the Montgomery County school system, which keeps records of the numbers of pupils eligible for the English for Speakers of Other Languages

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Twinbrook and Meadow Hall Elementary Schools
Free and Reduced-price Meal System Rate
 (As compared with Montgomery County as a whole)

School Year	Twinbrook Elementary (Planning Area 8)	Meadow Hall Elementary (Planning Area 7 – minus Burgundy Estates)	Montgomery County
2000 – 2001	48.1%	28.7%	27.6%
2001 – 2002	50.1%	33.0%	27.4%
2002 – 2003	53.7%	38.3%	28.4%
2003 – 2004	55.2%	39.7%	28.9%
2004 – 2005	60.3%	37.7%	30.0%
2005 - 2006	59.3%	42.9%	31.5%
2006 - 2007	56.9%	37.4%	29.7%
2007 - 2008	55.9%	37.0%	30.5%

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools, *Schools at a Glance*

These figures indicate that the level of need has increased in the Twinbrook area over the years, both at greater levels within each school, and at a faster rate than in the County as a whole. ~~However, the level of need appears to be leveling off in recent years, both within the Twinbrook neighborhoods, and in the County as a whole.~~

Twinbrook and Meadow Hall Elementary Schools
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Rate
 (As compared with Montgomery County as a whole)

School Year	Twinbrook Elementary (Planning Area 8)	Meadow Hall Elementary (Planning Area 7 – minus Burgundy Estates)	Montgomery County
2000 – 2001	21.9%	11.0%	8.2%
2001 – 2002	25.2%	11.3%	10.4%
2002 – 2003	25.2%	11.7%	11.8%
2003 – 2004	20.4%	10.9%	11.0%
2004 – 2005	20.8%	12.5%	12.3%
2005 - 2006	32.0%	14.1%	14.8%
2006 - 2007	38.1%	12.9%	16.4%
2007 - 2008	43.5%	17.6%	18.8%

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools, *Schools at a Glance*

These figures indicate that the Twinbrook Elementary enrollment area has a significantly higher level of diversity than the Meadow Hall area, which has a similar level of diversity to the County as a whole.

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(ESOL) Program, as well as the Free and Reduced Meal System (FARMS) program. Eligibility for the ESOL program depends upon a child's level of English language fluency, while the eligibility threshold for FARMS changes from year to year, but is set above the Federal poverty level. The enrollment area for Twinbrook Elementary School is approximately contiguous with Planning Area 8, while the enrollment area for Meadow Hall Elementary School is contiguous with Planning Area 7, minus Burgundy Estates, which lies within the Maryvale Elementary School boundary.

Regional Context: External Pressures on the Twinbrook Neighborhoods

The Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan addresses issues important to its residents and seeks to define the neighborhood's role within the City of Rockville and in the surrounding area of Montgomery County. The economy of metropolitan Washington D.C. remains stronger than many other parts of the country. continues to thrive. Many people, and the businesses that employ and serve them, want to move here to enjoy the high quality of life and opportunity that this ~~dynamic~~-area offers.

The population of Montgomery County, including the City of Rockville, is expected to increase by 207,000 people – approximately 18.1% - with a population of 1,145,000 anticipated by 2030. The number of households is expected to increase by 94,300 - or 21% - over the same period, with 441,300 anticipated by 2030. The County's household composition is projected to look different in the future, with more single person and childless households than in the past. MNCPPC's 2003 Census update survey showed that 53% of County households have two people or less. As household sizes decrease, more and more residents are looking for less traditional housing options such as townhouses, apartments and single family homes on smaller lots.

The population and household growth projections outlined above indicate that Montgomery County will need to add around 94,000 housing units during the next twenty-five years to accommodate its expected growth. However, very little developable land remains. The County has made a commitment to conserve large areas of rural land and to protect hundreds of thousands of acres in the Agricultural Reserve, thus limiting the amount of land available for new housing. The challenge of where to find the capacity to accommodate the projected population increase has led the County to look towards redevelopment and infill, and to redirect its planning efforts towards small area planning, especially around transportation nodes, with a greater emphasis on public participation. The County envisages the redevelopment of commercial shopping centers into vital, mixed-use

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Montgomery County (including City of Rockville)						
Summary of Intermediate Population Forecasts						
2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
873,300	938,000	990,000	1,035,000	1,075,000	1,112,000	1,145,000
Summary of Intermediate Household Forecasts						
2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
324,600	347,000	370,000	390,000	407,900	424,800	441,300

Source: Metropolitan Council of Governments (MWCOC) Round 7.0 Cooperative Forecasts. Fall 2007

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communities that include a range of amenities and public space. This effort is outlined in the Planning Framework Report entitled “Revitalizing Centers... Reshaping Boulevards... Creating Great Public Spaces...” Like Montgomery County, the City of Rockville is fast becoming “built out”, in that there is very little undeveloped land left, and infill development, as well as the redevelopment of underutilized sites and obsolete uses, will allow the City to meet its current and future needs.

The City has also recognized the need for the kind of small-area planning that the County is now undertaking, and community involvement is a hallmark of our planning process. This new Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan reflects the City’s commitment to include its citizens in the process of planning for the future of their own neighborhoods.

In an effort to manage its future growth, the City ~~is making~~ has made a major effort to update and revise the Zoning Ordinance. The ~~existing previous~~ Zoning Ordinance dated ~~ds~~ from 1975 and reflect~~eds~~ standards that were appropriate for the “Greenfield” development in the new, growing suburban community that was the Rockville of thirty years ago.† The City’s code ~~is in the process of being~~ has been revised ~~in order~~ to incorporate new ideas and new zoning concepts that can help to shape a city which is maturing towards full development. Such code concepts, ~~if approved by the Mayor and Council, may will~~ be helpful in carrying out the recommendations of the Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan, as well as those of other area plans within the City.

The Advisory Group made a special effort to coordinate its recommendations within the overall needs of the community, and not just address each planning element separately. Each of the subject chapters in ~~the our~~ Plan was considered in the context of all other chapters. To guide ~~our~~ deliberations, ~~we developed~~ a series of five “catalysts” ~~– or goals –~~ was created to act as guides ~~us as we worked when working~~ with the traditional planning elements. These catalysts group together Plan recommendations from the various chapters and should help residents, and the City, to identify projects and programs that

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can help meet the objectives laid out in each catalyst. They are more fully explained in ~~our final~~ Chapter Eight – Implementation.

- **Catalyst 1:** The Residential Areas: Maintain and enhance the residential character of the Twinbrook neighborhoods to ensure continued viability and sustainability.
- **Catalyst 2:** The Public Realm: Maintain, upgrade and acquire publicly-owned land to ensure that recreational opportunities, public accessibility and the natural environment enhance the quality of life for all residents.
- **Catalyst 3: Transportation and Accessibility: Promote safe and easy multi-modal access to mass transit, retail and community facilities.**
- **Catalyst ~~34~~:** The Commercial Areas: Promote the renewal of the Twinbrook neighborhood commercial areas.
- **Catalyst ~~45~~:** The Industrial Areas: Promote the renewal of the Twinbrook neighborhood industrial areas.
- ~~**Catalyst 5: Transportation and Accessibility: Promote safe and easy multi-modal access to mass transit, retail and community facilities.**~~